

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 SAM-01 /079 W

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FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5622

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MOPS MO SS SP

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: SPANISH CAPTURE MOROCCAN TROOPS IN
SAHARA

REF: FBIS LONDON 091309Z JUNE 75 (NOTAL)

1. SPANISH EMBASSY HERE AND SEMI-OFFICIAL MOROCCAN NEWS
AGENCY MAP, CITING SPANISH EUROPA PRESS AGENCY, HAVE
AMPLIFIED SLIGHTLY ON REF MESSAGE WHICH REPORTED THAT
46 MEMBERS OF A MOROCCAN ARMY UNIT HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY
SPANISH ARMY AFTER INVADING SAHARA AND ATTEMPTING TO

OCCUPY MILITARY OUTPOST IN COLONY 30 AND 40 KILOMETERS
RESPECTIVELY FROM MOROCCAN AND ALGERIAN FRONTIERS.
SPANISH EMBASSY SAID THAT REPORT ENTIRELY CORRECT AND
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THAT CAPTURED TROOPS BELONGED TO MEHARISTE (CAMEL CORPS)

UNIT WHICH INVADED SAHARA IN MISTAKEN IMPRESSION THAT SPANISH ARMY HAD ABANDONED ITS OUTPOST AT MAHBES. MOROCCANS WERE EVIDENTLY ATTEMPTING DENY OUTPOST TO OTHER ANTI-COLONIALIST ELEMENTS, NOTABLY PRO-INDEPENDENCE F POLISARIO, SPANISH EMBASSY SAID. WHEN MOROCCANS ARRIVED ON SCENE, SPANISH CALLED IN REINFORCEMENTS AND CAPTURED, APPARENTLY WITHOUT BLOODSHED, THE INVADERS, THEIR VEHICLES AND THEIR WEAPONS WHICH WERE LARGELY OF CZECH ORIGIN. MAP REPORTS INCIDENT IN MATTER-OF-FACT WAY AND NOTES THAT CAPTURED TROOPS HAD BEEN TAKEN TO EL AYOUN. AFP ITEM CARRIED IN PRESS JUNE 10 SAYS ACTION TOOK PLACE ON MORNING OF JUNE 8.

2. MAP ITEM ALSO CARRIES REPORT GIVEN IN REF MESSAGE THAT SPANISH ARMY HAD CAPTURED F POLISARIO JEEP IN SAHARA. ACCORDING TO MAP, JEEP CONTAINED FOUR F POLISARIO FIGHTERS AND WAS OPERATING NEAR ALGERIAN FRONTIER.

3. IN JUNE 9 SPEECH OPENING 25TH SESSION OF OAU'S AFRICAN LIBERATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE, KING HASSAN REFERRED TO CAPTURE OF "THIRTY PERSONS CLAIMING TO BE FROM FRONT FOR LIBERATION AND UNITY (FLU)". FLU IS PRO-MOROCCAN ORGANIZATION, WHICH IS SAID TO BE LED BY MOROCCAN ARMY OFFICERS AND WHICH HAS CONDUCTED NUMBER OF GUERRILLA OPERATIONS IN SAHARA IN RECENT PAST. REASON FOR ARRESTS, KING SAID, WAS THAT THOSE CAPTURED "WERE SAHRAOUI WHO WISHED TO REJOIN MOTHER COUNTRY". MOROCCANS, KING SAID, ACCEPT SPAIN'S RIGHT TO MAINTAIN ORDER IN COLONY BUT NOT TO IMPRISON SAHRAOUI WHO PROCLAIM THEIR LOYALTY TO MOROCCO WHILE ANOTHER MOVEMENT, "WHICH I SHALL NOT NAME", ALLOWED TO MOVE FREELY, TO CLASH WITH SPANISH TROOPS AND TO MAKE PRESENTATION TO UN FACT FINDING MISSION.

4. COMMENT: BOTH KING AND SPANISH EMBASSY SEEM FOR MOMENT TO BE REACTING CALMLY TO THIS INCIDENT, WHICH IS BY FAR MOST SERIOUS SPANISH-MOROCCAN CONFRONTATION TO DATE. WHILE THOSE CAPTURED MAY HAVE BEEN OPERATING UNDER SOME SORT OF FLU COVER, WE BELIEVE THAT SPANISH IDENTIFICATION OF THEM AS BELONGING TO 11TH COMPANY, 6TH BATALLION, ROYAL MOROCCAN ARMY (REF MESSAGE) PROBABLY CORRECT. THIS UNIT HAS FOR SOME CONFIDENTIAL

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TIME BEEN TRAINING SAHRAOUI AS GUERRILLA FIGHTERS.

5. AT MOMENT, INCIDENT APPEARS RESULT OF MOROCCAN INTELLIGENCE FAILURE. IF SPANISH DO BEGIN PULLBACK AT LATER DATE, THIS CLASH MAY WELL BE PREVIEW OF THINGS TO COME.
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